

Office of Congressman Charles W. Dent  
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Press Contact: Gregg W. Bortz  
610-861-9734 or (cell) 202-222-5118

## Congressman Dent votes to support troops

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Rep. Charlie Dent (PA-15) today voted against H. Res. 63, a resolution on the Iraq War. Congressman Dent opposed the measure out of concern for the harm it may cause American troops.

Congressman Dent issued the following statement:

“During the more than 30 hours of debate on H. Res. 63, we heard many arguments for and against this legislation. In the end, though, my decision on this matter boiled down to one seminal question: **Does this piece of legislation HELP or HARM the men and women who are serving in Iraq? I think that more harm will come from this than good.** Our troops—one of whom is a member of my Congressional staff currently deployed to Iraq—need to know that we are behind them and support what they are trying to do in that difficult environment. Because the morale and welfare of our troops comes first, I decided to vote AGAINST this resolution and FOR the men and women who are deployed to the Iraqi theater.

“As the debate evolved on this matter it became quite clear that this was part of the Majority’s strategy to do a ‘slow bleed’ on our troops who have fought so bravely and who have sacrificed so much. This resolution is clearly a precursor for those who would seek to cut-off funding little by little. It is the forerunner advocated by some in the Majority who would seek to deny our troops the opportunity to reinforce themselves—to take away the bullets and the beans, so to speak—so that, in the end, there would

be no acceptable option. But ‘death by a thousand cuts’ is no way to construct foreign or military policy.

“The Majority could have done much to make this resolution something I could have supported. They permitted no amendments or changes to the legislation. If they had, we could have considered a resolution such as the one offered by my colleague Frank Wolf from Virginia, which tracked the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, including those asking us to accelerate the training of the Iraqis and to promote diplomatic initiatives to foster peace.

**“That said, Congress must do more than state what it is against. It must state what it is for. Congress must lead in a bipartisan manner and provide a way forward. The status quo—or stay the course—is unacceptable.**

“I still have serious concerns regarding the Iraqi troop surge, especially relating to those projected deployments to Baghdad. It is not the role of the United States to referee the Sunni-Shi’ite sectarian dispute that is ongoing in the urban areas of that country. The Iraqi government must exert the political will to resolve this conflict, as our commitment in Iraq is NOT open-ended. In short, the Iraqis need to learn to do for themselves and lessen their dependence on US support.

**“If we had had the opportunity for amendment, we could have made clear our intentions about where we think that surge should be directed.** For example, I would have supported troop deployment provisions—provisions which appear in the bill of Senator John Warner (former Secretary of the Navy)—that focus on maintaining the territorial integrity of Iraq, that deny international terrorists a safe haven there, and that promote our vigorous prosecution of Al Qaeda operatives in Anbar province.

“In the end, my difference with the President over tactics is not important. What IS important is maintaining our support for the men and women of whom we ask so much. We want to be successful in Iraq, but this resolution does not offer a way forward. **Accordingly, I decided to vote against it.”**

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